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French Trade Policy During the GATT Uruguay Round: Between Domestic and International Constraints

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Abstract:

During the GATT Uruguay Round (1986-1993) France was one of the most conservative European member states and succeeded in influencing European position taking on agricultural trade liberalization. France's recalcitrant position is often considered an outcome of purely domestic political considerations, including in particular the pressure of the French farm lobby. Based on extensive empirical research this paper will show that there is insufficient evidence for this claim and that French farm lobby influence is grossly overstated. Instead, I will show that in order to understand French preference formation on the agricultural chapter of the Uruguay Round, both France's domestic and its international interests need to be taken into account. Furthermore, I will show that political and economic interest only explain part of the story. France's ideational interests (based on its policy paradigms and identity) played an important role in French preference formation. Ideational considerations at times strengthened the behavioural incentives based on France's political and economic interests and aided the government in selling their position to the domestic audience, and sometimes even trumped material interest when the two were at odds.

Introduction

In analyses of French foreign agricultural policy making it is a common empirical assertion that farmers in France dominate national preference formation both during European and global negotiations. Many authors argue that French farmers were able to influence decisively the national positions defended in the Council of Ministers and often succeeded in stalling reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) or trade liberalization in the context of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) (Philips 1990, Keeler 1996, Moravcsik 2000). The continuity in French defence of its agricultural sector in European and global negotiations is therefore usually explained in terms of a French government that simply cannot afford to ignore the pressure of the French farm lobby.

In this paper I will argue that French farm lobby influence on the government is indeed often asserted, but hardly convincingly demonstrated when it comes to European and global negotiations. Although domestic political pressure (such as the mobilization of the farm lobby) often represents the most visible appeal for protectionist agricultural policies – and perhaps as a result of that is the most often mentioned source of influence on governmental position-taking in empirical research – it is by no means the only potential consideration that can lead governments to protect the agricultural sector. Particularly when it comes to decision making within the European Union (EU), international political pressure can be an alternative source of influence. German pressure for protectionist agricultural policy and high guarantee prices for agricultural produce are a case in point. Furthermore, a state's economic interest can provide a government with incentives for protectionist agricultural policies, with or without high degrees of farm lobby mobilization. More importantly though, this paper will assert that, apart from focusing on material interests, consideration of the role of ideas (domestic policy paradigm, state identity) is indispensable if one wishes to explain the continuity in the French defence of its agricultural sector. Ideational considerations such as the Franco-German friendship and the French *vocation exportatrice* informed French perceptions of its political and economic interests and thus affected French preferences and positions. To the extent that domestic considerations are then decisive in the French decision-making process, these need not consist of political considerations of farm lobby mobilization alone (or even at all). Furthermore, this paper will even show that on some occasions, farm lobby mobilization was used in a 'tying-hand' strategy on the part of the Minister of Agriculture or the French representative in the Council of Ministers, rather than constituting a decisive determinant of governmental preferences.

In the remainder of this paper I will proceed as follows. I will first provide a brief review of scholarly work asserting French farm lobby influence and discuss the degree to which these publications provide actual convincing proof of such influence. Subsequently, in the theoretical section of this paper, I will add an ideational dimension to the state's material (political and economic) interests. The gist of my argument is that adding an ideational dimension to the analysis enables the explanation of continual French protectionist positions with respect to agriculture in European and international negotiations, despite variations in political and economic costs. The larger part of this paper will finally be devoted to presenting an in-depth analysis of French decision-making on the agricultural chapter of the GATT Uruguay Round (1986-1990), in which the validity of my claims will be put to the test.

Asserting Versus Demonstrating Farm Lobby Influence

Much of the literature focusing on the influence of non-governmental actors with respect to specific empirical domains fails to explicitly conceptualize influence and the way it can be measured. Betsill and Corell convincingly make this claim for much of the research in the environmental domain for example (Betsill and Corell 2001). They argue that many authors focus on the *activities* of NGO's such as lobbying, their *access* to certain negotiations and their *resources* in terms of knowledge and financial assets, but fail to measure the actual effect of these activities, access and resources. Of course, access and resources can increase the chances of effective influence for a certain group, but establishing the existence of access and resources does not equal or imply establishing effective influence. Betsill and Corell (2001: 74) speak of influence 'when one actor intentionally transmits information to another that alters the latter's actions from what would have occurred without that information'. This is in line with the so-called *process method* to influence assessment. According to this method, in order to ascribe influence to an actor, the actor must have attempted to exert influence, this influence attempt must have been noticed by the decision maker, *and* the decision maker adapted its position after the influence attempt, in accordance with the wishes of the actor that exerted influence (Bos and Geurts 1994). It is only by tracing the decision-making process itself that these three measurements can be made.¹

Although this approach to measuring influence may perhaps be demanding, it intuitively makes sense in that it tries to establish whether activities, resources and access are effectively related to *goal attainment*. Without the latter, influence would only be 'potential influence'. We will now assess whether important contributions on farm lobby influence on the French government with respect to European and global negotiations on agricultural policy meet these criteria.²

In an article titled 'Agricultural Power in the European Community: Explaining the Fate of CAP and GATT negotiations' John Keeler argues that the farm lobby is influential both in member states and at the European level due to its 'asymmetrical interest, extraordinary organization, and remarkably biased enfranchisement' (1996: 128). The remainder of the article is subsequently devoted to these aspects that make farm lobby influence more likely and Keeler underpins his claims with empirical illustrations of French and German decision making on CAP and GATT in the 1990s. It is only these illustrations that can be taken as empirical evidence of farm lobby influence and hence their effect on 'the fate of CAP and GATT negotiations'. Focusing on these illustrations though, they turn out to be analyses of the French and German scores on the above mentioned variables that indicate access and resources rather than that they are illustrations of farm lobby influence. When it comes to the Blair House agreement that was reached in the GATT Uruguay Round in 1992, for example, Keeler indicates the French government's position against this agreement. No farm lobby activities leading to this French

¹ Betsill and Corell add one additional measurement, counterfactual analysis. Here the researcher tries to substantiate 'whether the outcome of the negotiations might have been different in the absence of NGO's' (2001: 77).

² It is important to note that the focus here is on French positions defended in the EU or global arena, therefore excluding national agricultural policy formation and implementation.

position taking are mentioned here, except that France was able to apply a 'tied hands' strategy in the European arena due to 'credible waves of protests from French farmers'. It seems that agricultural influence is simply assumed here, because of the farm lobby's high scores on the variables that are expected to increase farm lobby influence. This in itself, however, is not a *demonstration* of effective influence. The influence in this article is potential rather than real.

Analysing European decision making on policies with regard to wheat in the 1970s and 1980s, Philips argues that French national farm organizations had strong to moderate influence on the ministries involved in the negotiations, and that the European Commission eventually defended an aggressive export expansion strategy in the Uruguay Round because of the intense domestic pressure (1990: 163). This claim, however, is not underpinned by measurements of positions, influence attempts and goal attainment. Rather, akin to Keeler, Philips focuses on the overlap in public and farm interests as well as their electoral clout and the corporatist relations between the French government and the farm lobby that guaranteed privileged access (103-106). We may therefore conclude again that potential influence is demonstrated rather than effective influence.

Working from a public choice analysis, Elliott and Heath argue that '[t]he dominance of agricultural interest in the input process is one aspect of the difficulties in achieving reform of the CAP.' (2000: 46). This conclusion is based on comparing the two extremes in the debate – farmers against consumers and taxpayers – with respect to their absolute size, rate of mobilization (real membership as percentage of the potential membership based on eligibility), preference intensity and pivotality (importance in the balance of power). Again, what is actually measured here is potential influence. I would subscribe to the hypotheses that a certain score on the variables or indicators used by Elliott and Heath would enhance an actor's *chances of* exerting effective influence, but these measurements in themselves do not imply effective influence. This would require additional empirical analysis that shows that those actors indeed made influence-attempts that were noticed by the government and that resulted in governmental action in line with the demands of the actor making the influence-attempt.

Focusing on European integration in the days of De Gaulle, Moravcsik (2000a, 2000b) claims that commercial interests were decisive for the French positions on CAP and GATT and that farm lobby pressure effectively influenced De Gaulle's policies in these domains. Although Moravcsik convincingly argues that the main focus on French geopolitical interests in much of the literature on French European policies is one-sided, I would argue that his analysis shows the importance that De Gaulle attached to *agriculture* as a commercial sector, but does not provide conclusive evidence that this was due to farm lobby mobilization. Instead of demonstrating farm lobby mobilization, the government's awareness of that and its subsequent adaptation of policies, Moravcsik rather asserts farm lobby influence, often with reference to farm lobby mobilization, but without tracing the decision-making process. With respect to potential subsidy reforms, for example, he states that 'opposition from farmers, sometimes violent, swiftly stymied these reform efforts' (2000a: 18). And with regard to European decision-rules and the 'empty chair' crisis, he asserts that De Gaulle 'ultimately settled the affair [...] under direct electoral pressure from farmers'. What is more, at some point Moravcsik even describes how the farm lobby mobilized against De Gaulle's European policies, while De Gaulle sincerely believed that he was defending French agriculture and even risked a defeat in the

presidential elections by holding on to his position (2000b: 41, 51). Peyrefitte (1997: 406-407) even accounts that De Gaulle did not feel accountable to the 'notables of the peasantry' but to 'la France'; the farmers' leaders did not understand him, but France would understand him. This can hardly be considered proof of farm lobby influence. In earlier work on this period, I therefore defended the argument that it was rather the interest of French agriculture than the mobilization of the farm lobby that was an issue of concern for De Gaulle and that this particular perception of the French economic interest was informed by ideational considerations based on the French identity as a great nation, leading Europe as a counterweight to the United States (Van der Vleuten and Alons 2012).

We may conclude that farm lobby influence tends to be asserted rather than convincingly demonstrated. This does not necessarily mean that the farm lobby was of no influence in the examples treated above, but that a more in depth empirical analysis with the use of process tracing would be needed to establish whether the extent of influence was indeed as extensive as assumed.³³ The empirical part of this paper will provide such an in-depth empirical analysis, partly based on primary archival records, of French preference formation on the agricultural chapter of the GATT Uruguay Round and will first of all allow me to draw conclusions on the mobilization and influence of interest groups. Secondly by including both material (political and economic) variables and ideational variables in the analysis, I will be able to assess the extent to which policy paradigms and considerations of the French state identity affected the French perception of its political and economic interests. Such an analysis will arrive at a more convincing explanation of the continuity of the French defence of its agricultural sector. In the next section I will elaborate on the theoretical underpinnings of this analysis.

The Ideational Dimension in Foreign Policy Formation

Starting from an interest-based approach, emphasizing the role of the government in selecting a preferred policy option under different constraints, I assume that a government will defend the policy option it deems to be most attractive from the perspective of its political and economic interests. The political interest covers the relative power position of the state internationally and domestically. A state seeks to defend its power position in the international

³³ It should be noted that my focus here is explicitly on French farm lobby influence on the government's position on *foreign* economic policy. A wider literature is available on French interest group influence on domestic policy making in which the agricultural sector is often considered an exception to the French 'strong state' rule – on the basis of which one would not expect extensive influence of interest-groups – because of corporatist relations between state and interest groups in this domain. Farm lobby influence is then explained by the farm lobby's privileged access to decision makers and positions in corporatist institutions. Whether state-society relations in this domain ever were and still are genuinely corporatist remains an issue of debate though (Culpepper 1993; Roederer-Rynning 2002, 2005). Nevertheless, even if one accepts that relations were corporatist and the farm lobby effectively executed influence in the domestic arena, it should be noted that their influence was mainly restricted to the implementation of domestic policies (see for example Keeler 1987). No corporatist institutional set-up existed with respect to foreign economic policy making. And even if the farm lobby enjoyed privileged access to the Ministry of Agriculture, this does not necessarily lead to effective influence, as in the domain of European and international policy making in France, the President and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs tend to dominate decision making (Van der Vleuten and Alons 2012).

system and the government's objective is to remain in office domestically. It may therefore be expected that a government will be particularly sensitive to domestic pressure when elections are approaching. Farm lobby pressure is more likely to be effective under such circumstances.

With respect to the economic interest, a government strives to increase national wealth and improve living standards. Common explanations of states' trade policies tend to be restricted to an analysis of these material interests. However, arguments based on material interests often provide incomplete explanations. They fail to take into account that, under conditions of imperfect knowledge of the political and economic costs and benefits of different policy options, political actors often rely on 'ideas about "how the world works" and "who we are", in order to make sense of the world and to identify the appropriate policy' (Van der Vleuten and Alons 2012: 270). In line with Darden (2009), who uses ideational factors to explain why a government consistently favours a certain definition of its national economic interest, I add an ideational dimension of the national interest to the analysis.

This ideational interest entails defending ideas that are central to the state and shape the beliefs of the state's decision-making elite. Such ideas are embedded in a state's national identity for example, or in its policy paradigms (the principles underlying its policies). National identity answers the question "who we are". It reflects "shared norms and narratives that sustain we-ness", distinguishing the "self" from the "other" (Banchoff 1999: 268), including through images of a common past or "collective orientations towards the future" such as "a sense of mission in the world" (Peters, 2002: 13-14). The national identity shapes the set of policy options deemed appropriate and makes some options more attractive than others. Relevant aspects of a state identity serve as a standard of legitimacy and can be used both by governmental and non-governmental domestic actors to validate their preferences or delegitimize the position of opponents (Van der Vleuten and Alons 2012). By including these ideational variables and their effects in the analysis of state preferences, I also respond to a common constructivist critique of rational-choice analysts, asserting that their models underestimate the influence of non-material factors on foreign policy.⁴

While the French political and economic interests during the Uruguay Round can be analysed on the basis of the different pressures (domestic and international) that were brought to bear on the government and estimates of the effects of trade liberalization on different sectors of the French economy, it is necessary to first identify relevant French policy paradigms and identity aspects relating to its position in the world, in order to estimate the ideational attractiveness of different policy options.

France's economic (and agricultural) policy paradigm is characterized by a high degree of state intervention in the market (Hayward 1983; Kessler 1999). While the neo-liberal economic paradigm gained ground in Europe in the 1980s and 1990s, it did not become dominant in France (Clift 2003), where the Keynesian approach and (neo)mercantilist ideas have remained deeply ingrained. For French preference-formation this implies that policy

⁴ See for example, Banchoff (1999), Finnemore (1996) and Katzenstein (1996). I only focus on the effects of given state identities on state preferences, without problematizing the concept of identity itself (cf Ruggie 1998), and will thus not investigate the prior *construction* of these identities.

options that take away important instruments of intervention and signify the introduction of stronger market-forces in the agricultural sector are unattractive from an ideational perspective. Furthermore, Mercantilists view 'international institutions as a threat to national economic autonomy and an effort by other states to impose an economic regime serving their own interests' (Darden 2009: 307). Tendencies toward political autonomy on the part of the European Commission with respect to the conduct of the GATT negotiations are then viewed with suspicion, as well as proposals put forward by the United States in GATT.

Turning to the French identity, three aspects are particularly relevant when it comes to (economic) foreign policy: France's self-image of being *la Grande Nation* leading a European coalition against United States dominance, the Franco-German friendship, and the French *vocation exportatrice*.

It was Charles de Gaulle who originally proclaimed a '*politique de grandeur*', but consecutive presidents to this day have emphasized French power and prestige (Kessler 1999; Meunier 2010). This French vision of its powerful and independent place in the world has often been and still is combined with fierce resistance to American hegemony if not forthright anti-Americanism (Kessler 1999). Clearly, France alone is by no means powerful enough to compete with the United States on equal terms. Since the 1960s, France therefore has sought to gain leverage through multilateral organizations, particularly the EC (Cogan 2003; Kessler 1999). From the start of the European integration process, France considered itself the leading state within a strong Europe to resist dominance by either of the two superpowers and after the Cold War, France intended to lead the EC to resist American hegemony (Cogan 2003).

Although France considered itself the leading state in the EC and also welcomed European integration as an instrument to tie Germany in and preclude it from becoming an independent power (Haywood 1993, 278-279), it developed a deep friendship with Germany, the importance of which is often emphasized by the metaphor of the Franco-German friendship as the engine of European integration. This "*amitié privilégiée*" is central to France's European policy (Delorme, 1994: 42). It also has quasi-regime like qualities in that it entails (unwritten) behavioural norms (Cole 2001). With respect to issues that one or the other or both regard as politically salient (their interests being fundamentally at stake), France is expected not to support policy options that Germany opposes because it is detrimental to fundamental German interests (even if supporting the decision would serve French material interests), and *vice-versa* (Webber 1999).

Finally, there is also an agricultural aspect to the French vision of *grandeur*. Within Europe, Germany's great industrial and financial power had to be balanced by France as the '*grande puissance agricole et militaire*' (Hoffmann 1990: 504). In this vein, France ascribes to itself a role as an important exporter of qualitatively superior agricultural products (Fouilleux 1996). Giscard d'Estaing referred to agricultural trade as France's *petrole vert* (Bourdon 1990: 54) and the term *vocation exportatrice* increasingly emerged in governmental documents in the middle of the 1980s. Economic prosperity is not the only concern when it comes to the French wish for export expansion, though. French presence in the export market is considered a goal in itself (Kessler 1999). This aspect of the French state identity informs the perception of its economic interests in that it delegitimizes any policy alternative that fails to acknowledge the French *vocation exportatrice* and hampers French presence in the agricultural world market.

My expectation is that the ideational factors just elaborate informed French preferences with respect to the agricultural chapter of the GATT Uruguay Round and explain the continuity in the French defence of its agricultural sector in European and international negotiations, against a background of varying economic costs and benefits. In order to demonstrate this claim, the empirical analysis should show that the government consistently refers to these ideational considerations in the explanation and legitimization of its position, particularly in cases where economic concerns should give rise to a different position. In order to disprove the common claim that farm lobby mobilization explains the French preferences in the case under study, I should find evidence that the government defended positions that were at odds with the demands of the farm lobby or that the variation in farm lobby mobilization showed a different trend than the development of the French negotiating position.

French preference formation in the GATT Uruguay Round

1982-1986: The launch of a new GATT Round

A new round of GATT negotiations was instigated in the beginning of the 1980s, at a time of international economic slowdown and increasing protectionism. Agriculture figured prominently on the agenda and particularly the United States was keen on placing this sector under stricter GATT discipline (Davis 2003: 272-273). The EC was not ready yet to start a new round of GATT negotiations though (Paemen and Bensch 1995: 32) and within the EC, France took a very reserved position from the start.

Considering its political and economic interests, this position was not surprising. United States pressure in favour of new negotiations was balanced by a lack of political pressure within the EC to participate. Economically, France profited from the CAP policies (particularly the export subsidies) that the United States wanted to put up for debate in the GATT negotiations. Although France was one of the most efficient agricultural producers within the EC, it needed export subsidies to export its agricultural produce (cereals in particular) on the world market (Delorme 1994: 41). These agricultural subsidies provided an important contribution to France's trade balance (*Agra Europe* 13.8.1982). Of course, potential losses in the agricultural sector could be offset by gains in other economic sectors through trade liberalization in GATT — such as the services sector in which France had a comparative advantage — but negotiating successes in this sector were highly uncertain considering that many developing countries did not want to include the issue in the negotiations. French economic interests differed from German overall economic interests. Although Germany, due to its uncompetitive agricultural sector based on small-scale farming, also stood to lose in the agricultural domain,⁵ these losses were very likely to be canceled out by gains in the industrial sector in which Germany was highly competitive (Porter 1990). Germany therefore welcomed a new round of trade

⁵ Although liberalization would hurt both French and German agriculture, their agricultural interest were not entirely similar. While France particularly needed export restitutions and could gain a larger share of the EC agricultural market if guarantee prices were reduced, Germany was dependent on high guarantee prices instead of export subsidies.

negotiations from the start, but it refrained from putting the French under too much pressure in the early 1980s.⁶

The position that France defended was that the EC should not accept a new GATT round including negotiations on agriculture. This would put the EC in a defensive position, particularly because the proposal on agricultural negotiations targeted export subsidies exclusively, while other instruments of agricultural support would be left unaffected. Instead, *all* forms of agricultural support should be discussed and France should not have others (read: the United States) impose a negotiating agenda.⁷ The issue of a balanced negotiating agenda was raised repeatedly by France between 1982 and 1985, while the GATT working programme was developed.⁸ Another demand France made was that the CAP should not be up for discussion.⁹ These arguments are clearly economic in nature and although they are related to France's agricultural export capacities in particular, the French position was not legitimated on the basis of France's *vocation exportatrice* at this point in time.

But what about the impact of farm lobby mobilization. The farmers indeed staged demonstrations in this period, but these were caused by proposals on CAP reform (milk quota) and French domestic agricultural policy rather than by the GATT negotiations (Alons 2010). The largest French farm organization (the FNSEA) was particularly enraged about the socialist government's granting of access to the formal consultation process between government and farm lobby to left-oriented farm organizations (*L'information Agricole* May 1983). With respect to GATT, the sources studied do not show that these interest groups decisively influenced the government. They hardly mobilized proactively and rather reacted on positions defended by the government and decisions made at GATT Ministerial conferences. In their pleas they copied the government's argumentation rather than influencing it and repeated the issues raised earlier by the government that including agriculture in the way proposed would be negotiating from a position of weakness and that the negotiations should be about 'mutual agricultural disarmament at world level' (*L'information Agricole* February 1986, May 1986). One difference though is that they did put relatively more emphasis on framing the agricultural proposals in GATT as a United States offensive against European agriculture (*L'information Agricole* February 1986).

By 1985 pressure on France to accept new GATT negotiations including agriculture started to increase from within the EC. Germany stepped up its diplomatic pressure to convince the French that they too stood to benefit the most from a more open world trading system.¹⁰ Political pressure further increased when the EC became isolated during the GATT Ministerial conference in Punta del Este: the conference that aimed at launching the new trade round.

⁶ ArchEZ. WE-BEB-55. Verslag van de vergadering van art 113 (leden) op 12.11.1982; BArch. B102: 271991 7.3.1984. Informelle Ministerrunde zur Vorbereitung einer neuen "Reagan-Runde".

⁷ CAC 19860691, art 1 20.6.1985. Discours de monsieur Henri Nallet, Ministre de l'agriculture: ArchEZ, WA-BEB-55. Verslag Comité artikel 113 (leden) van 15.10.1982.

⁸ ArchEZ.WA-BEB-55. Verslag Comité artikel 113 (leden) van 15.10.1982; ArchEZ 823g EZACL 313 4833. EZ/BEB. Verslag van de vergadering van art. 113 (leden) van 4.6.1984 and 11.9.1984.

⁹ CUEAC. 9113/84, GATT 120. Sommaire des conclusions du Comité spécial de l'article 113 (membres dupléants) en date du 11 septembre 1984.

¹⁰ BArch. B102 292882 1.7.1985. Verhältnis EG/USA. Gesprächsziel: Frankreich bewusst machen, das seinen Interessen langfristig am besten durch eine weltoffene Handelspolitik gedient ist.

While most of the GATT parties were willing to accept the declarations proposed, the EC, under pressure from the French, was forced to withhold its support (*Journal of Commerce* 18.9.1986). The explicit reference to export subsidies in the text on agriculture was the main obstacle. Before the negotiations started, the French had already stressed that the EC should adopt an assertive attitude to defend its agricultural export policies which were essential in view of the *vocation exportatrice* of the agricultural sector (*Agence Europe* 11.6.1986). During the negotiations in Punta del Este the French Minister of Trade repeated that export subsidies, an important pillar of the CAP, could not be discussed separately and that support measures applied in other GATT states should be subject to debate as well (*Agra Europe* 19.9.1986). He even threatened to leave the negotiations over this issue (United Press International 18.9.1986).

Together with the United States Trade Representative, Germany now exerted extensive pressure on France and tried to find formulations with the aim '*den Franzosen Brücken zu bauen*' and overcoming French resistance (*Handelsblatt* 19.9.1986). Eventually, France came to accept a compromise text including the objective of 'improving the competitive environment by increasing discipline on the use of all direct and indirect subsidies and other indirect measures affecting directly or indirectly agricultural trade' (*Agra Europe* 26.8.1986). The French demand that the negotiations should not focus on export subsidies exclusively was met and the farm lobby showed itself fairly satisfied (*L'information Agricole* November 1986). Economic interests informed by the ideational consideration of the *vocation exportatrice* can explain the change in French preference. The question remains though, whether the decision to agree to the negotiating proposals at the last minute was also influenced by considerations of the Franco-German friendship. Although no references are made in the French documents analysed to its relations with Germany as a special issue of concern, it is striking that French acceptance only came after fierce pressure exerted by Germany. In secondary literature on this issue, a large degree of influence is ascribed to France's relationship with Germany, and it is asserted that France eventually agreed to include agriculture in the Uruguay Round to prevent a 'major break with Germany' (Webber 1998: 37: 247; Paemen and Bensch 1994: 6).

1986-1989: The early years: modalities rather than content

With respect to agriculture, the first years of the Uruguay Round were largely devoted to negotiations on the form and modalities of the eventual agreement: what type of policies should be negotiated separately and to what extent and with which speed the different measures should be reduced.¹¹ The degree of mobilization of the French farm lobby remained relatively low in this period and was largely supportive of how the French government dealt with the negotiations.

France repeatedly clashed with the United States on what should be considered 'agricultural support' that was eligible for reduction. The United States tabled proposals in GATT to eliminate export subsidies (as applied in the EC) altogether and to put this issue on a fast track compared to other forms of support (elimination within five years), while it did not

¹¹ After the launch of the negotiations in Punta del Este, the label 'Uruguay Round' was used for the new GATT negotiations.

consider its *deficiency payments* to constitute export assistance as a result of which these payments were not up for elimination.¹² The US furthermore wanted non-tariff barriers to be converted into fixed tariffs to be subsequently reduced (Swinbank and Tanner 1996). This affected CAP instruments such as the variable-import levies that guaranteed community preference.¹³

France called upon the Commission to reject such proposals on behalf of the EC. It accused the United States of waging a one-sided attack on the CAP and simultaneously being unwilling to put its own agricultural policies on the negotiating table.¹⁴ The United States was putting the idea of a *communauté exportatrice* to the test as well as the principles of the CAP, France claimed.¹⁵ In the run-up to GATT ministerial meetings in Montréal in 1988 and Geneva in 1989, during which agreement was to be reached on the framework of the agricultural agreement, France kept insisting that dismantlement of export subsidies was out of the question and that only a global '*concertée et progressive*' reduction of *all* forms of agricultural support was acceptable.¹⁶ The French Minister of Agriculture stated that he had to maintain firm, because agricultural exports, supported by the EC export restitutions, were a '*nécessité vitale pour l'équilibre de notre commerce extérieur*'.¹⁷ In the end, the GATT partners agreed that a GATT accord should include 'substantial progressive reduction of agricultural support over an agreed period of time' (Moyer 1993: 97) and that negotiations would take place on three separate issues: internal support, import access and export assistance (Paemen and Bensch 1995: 140-141). France was satisfied and maintained that the EC had escaped from a one-sided emphasis on export subsidies and that the elimination of agricultural support had been replaced by a '*réduction globale progressive équilibrée de tous les soutiens agricoles*'.¹⁸ The French farm lobby was content with the actions of their government and argued that France was the member state that had insisted most strongly on standing up to the United States (*L'information Agricole* September 1988) and that it was thanks to the French government and the support of the farmers that the EC had been able to avoid the role of '*accusée*' and had instead issued its own set of demands (*L'information Agricole* May 1989).¹⁹

The French position taking and legitimating discourse shows that it was the French perception of its economic interest, informed by the importance attached to the *vocation*

¹² Although the American deficiency payments were decoupled from production, they affected world agricultural markets in much the same way as export restitutions (*Agra Europe* 26.9.1986).

¹³ Community preference is an underlying principle of the CAP meaning that products originating in the EC are favoured over imports from third countries through variable import levies.

¹⁴ ArchBuZa. VN/ 1985-1994: 03963. 2.2.1987. Open bericht NLBUZ 713, GEV 961.

¹⁵ CAC. 19940616, art 5. Les négociations commerciales multilatérales et la réunion à mi-parcours de Montréal.

¹⁶ CAC. 19930195, art 2. Nallet. Note pour le Premier Ministre. Objet: votre rencontre avec J. Delors. Questions agricoles. See also discours of Nallet in the Assemblée. *Journal Officiel de la République Française*, Assemblée nationale, séance du 14 décembre 1988, 3648-3649; séance du 5 avril 1989, 41.

¹⁷ CAC. 19930195, art 2 22.3.1989. Ministère de l'agriculture et de la forêt. Note. Objet: Entretien entre le président de la République et M. Delors. Négociations agricoles du GATT.

¹⁸ CAC. 19930195, art 2. Résultat de la négociation agricole à Genève. Canovas de l'intervention de M. Henri Nallet. Conférence de Presse du 10 avril 1989; 1.9.1989. Situation des négociations d'Uruguay.

¹⁹ Indeed, the farm lobby had sent a delegation to the negotiations in Montreal to take part in a worldwide demonstration of '*solidarité paysanne*' (*L'Information Agricole* December 1988) to support the demands of France and the EC.

exportatrice, that was dominant once again. An undercurrent of resistance to proposals tabled by the United States, in line with both French mercantilism and its self-ascribed role as balancer of United States dominance, seems to indicate the relevance of these ideational considerations as well, but they certainly did not dominate the governmental discourse.²⁰ The Franco-German friendship was not at stake since Germany defended its agricultural interest just as fervently in the GATT negotiations (Alons 2010). To the extent that the friendship was a consideration it therefore supported the preferences based on the French economic interest.

1990: Breakdown at Heysel

In 1989, the GATT partners had committed themselves to tabling agricultural proposals by October 1990, which would serve as the basis for the Heysel conference in December 1990. The Commission requested permission of the Council of Ministers to submit a proposal in GATT to reduce agricultural subsidies by 30 per cent in ten years. A heated and protracted debate erupted in the Council of Ministers in which France emerged as one of the strongest opponents of the Commission proposal.

France argued that the proposal would put the CAP principle of community preference on the line, damaging the *vocation exportatrice*. Furthermore, in accordance with its mercantilist economic policy paradigm focusing on state intervention, it criticized the way in which the proposal would contribute to introducing increased market-forces in the agricultural domain at the expense of state intervention.²¹ France also requested specification of the potential consequences of the reductions and demanded accompanying measures that should soothe the detrimental consequences for the agricultural sector.²²

Farm lobby pressure largely reflected the government's arguments against the Commission proposal. They also worried that the proposal would undermine the CAP, damage French export potential and would imply the 'disappearance of community preference' (*L'Information Agricole* September 1990, October 1990).²³ The FNSEA did not favour demanding accompanying measures though, fearing that this could lead to replacement of the existing support measures by direct income support.²⁴ What is remarkable in the discourse of the farm lobby though, is that they framed their arguments in terms of the French role as a force against United States dominance. Accepting the proposal was consistently presented as a form of capitulation to the United States, 'kneeling before the power of the United States', and the EC's inability to resist such pressure from the United States was denounced (Agence France Presse

²⁰ What is interesting in this respect is that in their debate, the members of the *Assemblée Nationale* devoted particular effort to criticizing the United States' conduct in the negotiations rather than making demands to the French government (Alons 2012). Apparently, arguments that were specifically aimed against the United States were favourably received and profitable for domestic consumption. This seems to reflect anti-American sentiments in France.

²¹ CAC. 19930192 9.10.1990. Communiqué de Premier Ministre: CAC. 19920056, 16.10.1990. Conseil agricole, Intervention de M. Mermaz.

²² CAC. 19920056, art 8. Conseil agricole du 8 octobre 1990. Intervention de M. Louis Mermaz.

²³ CAC. 19920056, art 7. APCA. 5.9.1990. Communiqué de Presse du 5 septembre 1990.

²⁴ CAC. 19920056, art 7. 15.10.1990. FNSEA. Letter of Lacombe to Mermaz; 17.10.1990. FNSEA. Communiqué de Presse. GATT: les masques sont tombés.

2.11.1990).²⁵ It was even argued that the Commission was turning over the internal market to United States hegemony.²⁶ Once the French government accepted a watered-down version of the Commission proposal in 1990, the farm lobby even spoke of a '*capitulation sans condition*' and an '*acquiescement à la logique américaine*' (Agence France Presse 6.11.1990). The farm lobby clearly tried to buttress its own position and delegitimize opposing stances by appealing to ideational considerations.

The French government reacted by criticizing those who qualified the European accord as '*capitulation de la France*'. Prime minister Rocard argued that the agreement reached safeguarded the principles of the CAP, which had consistently been the French demand from the start. The Minister of Agriculture asserted that no unilateral concessions had been made to the United States, but that the European accord, instead, implied '*un engagement comparable des USA*' (Agence France Presse 7.11.1990). The farm lobby's rhetorical appeal to France's ideational interest thus did not seem to result in effective farm lobby influence. The government did not heed the FNSEA's warning against demanding accompanying measures either. Judging from reports of the interministerial meetings at which the positions to be defended in the Council of Ministers were determined, only the Ministry of Foreign Affairs appeared worried about demands for accompanying measures, albeit for other reasons than the farm lobby. This did not keep the other participants in the meeting from including the demand for accompanying measures in the negotiating brief. The only participant in the interministerial meeting that emphasized the interests of French agriculture and showed some concern about the Commission proposal being badly received in the agricultural world, was the representative of President Mitterrand. Although the Minister of Agriculture was the actor most reserved on the Commission proposal during the interministerial decision-making process, he focused on the interest of French agriculture in general rather than answering to specific farm lobby demands.²⁷ He was even advised to use (rather than heed to) potential disquiet among French farmers to gain concessions from other ministries in the interministerial meetings (a sort of domestic 'tied hands' strategy).²⁸ The Minister of Agriculture decided to use such a tied-hands strategy at the European level in the Council of Ministers, stating that the French government could not leave the French farmers in the lurch by accepting the Commission proposal.²⁹

Where farm lobby mobilization did not seem to be very consequential, French governmental documents do show an increasing concern about Franco-German solidarity as European decision-making dragged on. At a point where some of the German demands had been met by the Commission, France feared that Germany would not remain a reliable partner

²⁵ CAC. 19920056, art 7. 9.10.1990. FNSEA. Communiqué de Presse; 20.9.1990. Confédération Paysanne.

²⁶ CAC. 19920056, art 7. 4.10.1990. MODEF communiqué. Coup de grace!

²⁷ CAC. 19920056, art 7. 8.10.1990. Secrétariat général du gouvernement. Compte rendu de la réunion interministérielle, tenue le samedi 6 octobre 1990 à 10:00 sous la présidence de monsieur Cotin, chargé de mission au cabinet du Premier Ministre. Objet: négociations commerciales multilatérales: projet d'offre communautaire.

²⁸ CAC. 19920056, art 3. 18.10.1990. Note pour le ministre. Objet: GATT comité interministériel du 19 octobre 1990.

²⁹ CAC. 19920056, art 8. 19.10.1990. Conseil agriculture. Intervention de M. le Ministre.

and would allow the Council of Minister to pass the proposal using qualified majority voting.³⁰ This uncertainty about the Franco-German axis did not lead France to move closer to the German position and find a compromise though, but instead made for additional French pressure to be exerted on the Germans. And Germany did not let France down and stuck with its partner until the Commission had made sufficient concessions to satisfy the French. Where the Franco-German friendship made Germany oblige to its French partner (Alons, forthcoming 2013) the French perception of the Franco-German friendship seemed to be that in case of disagreement, Germany had to give in.

The development of the French position on the Commission proposal in the autumn of 1990 is best explained by a French perception of its economic interests informed by its *vocation exportatrice* and interventionist economic policy paradigm. Anti-US-dominance discourse clearly increased in the policy process, but the ideational consideration at the basis of this discourse did not seem to influence the policy outcome effectively. The same applies to considerations of the Franco-German friendship: these surfaced in the policy process but did not lead to changes in French preferences and positions.

1991: Dunkel intervenes

The Heysel conference, where the Commission defended the agricultural proposal on which it had gained member states' approval with such great difficulty, ended in a stalemate for which the EC was blamed due to its inflexibility regarding agriculture. The deadlock in the negotiations made Arthur Dunkel, Secretary General of the GATT, present the Draft Final Act in December 1991, proposing reductions of 35 per cent on customs duties and export assistance (including the EC export subsidies but not the American deficiency payments). Since the larger part of the EC member states had problems with the Draft Final Act, intra-European political pressure on France to give in was limited.³¹ The German position on agriculture had made a more liberal turn after a German cabinet decision October 1991, but Germany failed to put extensive pressure on its French partner when the Council of Ministers decided on the EC position on the Draft Final Act (Alons 2010). From an economic perspective the proposal was even less attractive than the Commission proposal in 1990, considering the slightly higher reduction percentages. Farm lobby pressure with regard to the GATT was limited. Instead they focused their attention on the parallel negotiations on CAP-reform as the French government, against the explicit wishes of the farm lobby, had ceased to resist the idea of reform in October 1991 (*L'Information Agricole* November 1991, December 1991, Fouilleux 1996: 68-71).

The French government refused to accept the Draft Final Act as a basis for the agricultural negotiations in GATT, referring to its adverse effects on French export potential.³² Government position taking was not based on concern for the French *vocation exportatrice* alone though. It repeatedly legitimized its rejection of Dunkel's text with reference to EC independence as a counterweight to United States hegemony. The government's reaction was wrought with rhetoric similar to that which the farm lobby had applied in vain the year before.

³⁰ CAC. 19920056, art 8. 24.10.1990. Bernard Vial. Ministère de l'agriculture et de la forêt. Note pour Monsieur le Ministre; 24.10.1990.

³¹ CAC. 19940617, art 8. 16.12.1991. MAF. Note pour le ministre. Objet: situation des négociations d'Uruguay.

³² CAC. 19930192, Conseil des ministres, 26 December 1991.

The prime minister asserted that the Draft reflected 'too unilaterally the American positions' (*Le Monde*, 21.12.1991), while Mitterrand warned during a cabinet meeting that 'France is not ready to bow to American demands' (*Financial Times* 16.1.1992). A mix of economic and ideational concerns provide the best explanation of French preferences in 1991.

1992: An agricultural deal at last

The Draft final Act did not lead to the GATT agreement that Dunkel had hoped for. Negotiations on agriculture now continued on a bilateral level between the EC and the United States, resulting in the Blair House Agreement in 1992. This deal included smaller reductions in subsidized exports, and the direct income payments that had been introduced with the CAP-reform of May 1992 would be placed in the 'green box' of support that was not subject to reductions. Although the economic costs of this outcome seemed limited for France, since the reductions required were likely to be covered by the CAP-reform (Alons 2010), France still vehemently rejected the Blair House Accord. This position can only be understood by reference to France's ideational interests combined with the fierce farm lobby pressure at a time of increasing governmental sensitivity.

As early as February 1992 the FNSEA warned that if the Commission accepted a compromise before the October elections in the United States, it would be conniving with the aggressor (*Le Monde* 29.2.1992). Demonstrations were staged against United States imperialism and hegemony (*Le Monde* 10.4.1992, 18.4.1992). Shortly prior to the agreement of the Blair House accord, the FNSEA warned that a bad deal would be blamed on the government (*La Croix* 14.11.1992) and that a '*diktat américain*' was by no means acceptable.³³ Accepting a deal with the United States would be the greatest diplomatic humiliation for the EC since its establishment (*Le Monde* 20.11.1992). Once the Blair House agreement was reached on 20 November 1992, the farm lobby called for a '*résistance absolu vis-à-vis des agresseurs Américains*' and demanded a '*non au Munich agricole*' (*L'Information Agricole* November 1992, December 1992). They further claimed that the agreement went beyond the CAP-reform and demanded that the government use its veto.³⁴

This pressure was likely to be more effective in 1992 due to increased governmental sensitivity and because the farm lobby, in their discourse described above, appealed to ideational arguments that the government itself had used earlier. The socialist government had lost in the local elections of March 1992 and general elections were due in 1993. Furthermore, Mitterrand nearly lost the referendum on ratification of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, in which no less than 76 per cent of farmers rejected ratification (Kim 2010:333). This led Jean-Pierre Soisson, who had recently acceded to the French government as Minister of Agriculture to reject any GATT deal that damaged French agricultural interests (Soisson 1993).

It should come as no surprise then, that the French government immediately rejected the Blair House accord. It was not considered compatible with the CAP-reform and would have

³³ www.vie-publique.fr/discours: 19.11.1992. Passage antenne RTL.

³⁴ CAC. 19930189, art 3. 23.11.1992. Chambre départementale d'agriculture de Loire; CAC. 19920196, art 11. 6.1.1993. FNSEA. Position du syndicalisme agricole français sur le compromis Washington.

a more adverse impact on EC agricultural exports than on American exports.³⁵ France thus argued that it was incompatible with the French *vocation exportatrice* and further demanded that the EC should not accept an agreement that was imposed by the United States but instead assume its responsibility and negotiate on an equal footing with the US.³⁶ Laurent Fabius even framed the entire GATT issue as a question of United States dominance versus EC independence: 'In essence the question is whether it is the United States that dictates the rules for the French and European economy or whether it is up to Europe to throw its weight in.'³⁷ In the *Assemblée* the French prime minister declared that France would use its veto if French interests were insufficiently safeguarded (*Agra Europe* 27.11.1992). It even put the issue to parliament and asked for support of a declaration that, among other things, stated that France would veto any agreement that prejudiced fundamental French interests (Naylor 1994).

Although this preference is in line with French domestic political incentives and concerns for its *vocation exportatrice*, it was damaging for the Franco-German relationship. Germany had become increasingly interested in reaching an overall GATT-deal due to the advantages of deals reached in the industrial domain and wanted to prevent agriculture from blocking a final GATT agreement any longer (Alons, 2010).³⁸ It therefore increased its pressure on France to make concessions on agriculture. The German Minister of Economics warned France that any deal resulting from the bilateral negotiations with the United States would be subject to a vote by qualified majority (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*), implying that France could no longer count on German support. France was indeed aware of fractures in the Franco-German axis with respect to GATT, but continued its resistance nevertheless, arguing that the Franco-German axis did not justify all possible compromises.³⁹ It even appealed to Franco-German solidarity in order to win German backing on agriculture, warning that Germany would strike at the heart of Franco-German relations if it failed to support France.⁴⁰ Shortly prior to the Blair House deal, France still counted on German support, French government officials emphasizing that Germany had always shown solidarity with France (*Libération* 14.10.1992).⁴¹ Germany, however judged that there was an end to how far solidarity with France should be taken on this issue (*Süddeutsche Zeitung* 30.11.1992) and accepted the Blair House accord, isolating France in the negotiations.

French considerations of its political and economic interests, informed by the ideational concerns for a *vocation exportatrice* and the role of France in leading the EC against United

³⁵ CAC. 19930179, art 6. 30.11.1992. commissariat Général du Plan. Le volet agricole du GATT et le réforme de la P.A.C.

³⁶ www.vie-publique.fr/discours: 22.11.1992. Interview with Bérégovoy, *France 2*; 23.11.1992. Interview with Strauss-Kahn, *RTL*.

³⁷ www.vie-publique.fr/discours: 27.11.1992. Interview with Fabius, *RTL*.

³⁸ It is important to note in this respect that the GATT negotiations were considered a single undertaking and that agreements reached within the different negotiating groups would only come into force once a total GATT deal was reached, including all the negotiating areas.

³⁹ CAC. 19930316, art 1. 6.2.1992. Positions allemandes à la veille du conseil agriculture des 10 et 11 février 1992; CAC 19930195, art 3. Note pour le ministre. Objet: preparation du conseil de ministres de 2 et 3 mars 1992.

⁴⁰ BArch. N1436. 21.1.1992. Fernschreiben aus Paris diplo an Bonn AA.

⁴¹ www.vie-publique.fr/discours: 9.11.1992. Interview accordée par Strauss-Kahn a *Europe 1*; Interview accordée par Strauss-Kahn. *Le Nouvel Observateur*.

States hegemony, were decisive in explaining the French preference in 1992. Pressure exerted by the farm lobby could not be ignored, resulting in a governmental discourse that was in line with farm lobby discourse and demands, including threatening with a French veto. While France tried to appeal to the Franco-German friendship again in order to maintain German support, its appeals were in vain this time.

1993: From Blair House to the final accord

When the socialist government was replaced by a centre-right coalition after the March 1993 parliamentary elections, this was not accompanied by any relaxation of the French attitude towards the GATT negotiations. The government regarded the Blair House Accord to be unacceptable for much the same reasons as the preceding socialist government had done, and wanted renegotiation of the deal.⁴² The government was reluctant to make explicit references to any use of the veto by France, but it was clear that a French veto was still considered a genuine possibility.⁴³ It now focused on the difficult task of finding support to escape from its isolated position (*L'Année politique, économique et sociale* 1993: 17-18). They particularly sought for renewed German backing, which appeared to come forward in a statement by Chancellor Kohl in August 1993, that the Germans also had problems with the Blair House accord (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 2.9.1993).⁴⁴ France now tried to arrive at a joint position with Germany and in a meeting of the Council of Ministers it settled for 'clarification' of the Blair House accord instead of renegotiation, an outcome that would have been highly unlikely without German support (Webber 1999, Alons 2010). On their part, the French underlined their leading role in defining the European position, as within the EC they had been isolated in their resistance to the agreement.⁴⁵

Negotiations with the United States were resumed and resulted in a GATT deal in December 1993, which contained some additional concessions on the part of the United States. The French government now claimed that the accord had been substantially improved and that this progress was essentially due to the European position France had obtained in the September Council meeting.⁴⁶ It also emphasized that the agreement meant a victory over the United States, repeatedly stating that it was the United States that had had to make the concessions.⁴⁷ The prime minister stressed that it was because of the positive consequences of

⁴² www.vie-publique.fr/discours: 13.5.1993. Discours de M. Christian Ligeard sur le compromis de Blair House; 17.7.1993: Interview de M. François Mitterrand accordée à *TF1, France 2 et Europe 1*.

⁴³ www.vie-publique.fr/discours: 24.6.1993. Audition du ministre délégué aux affaires européennes, Alain Lamassoure, devant la commission des affaires étrangères de l'Assemblée nationale.

⁴⁴ It is argued that in this respect France was skilful in connecting the European Monetary System issue (this system was in crises and Germany needed French support to take measures) with the GATT issue to put Germany under additional pressure to back the French demands on GATT (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 10.9.1993, 19.9.1993).

⁴⁵ www.vie-publique.fr/discours: 17.10.1993. Interview accordée par le Premier Ministre M. Édouard Balladur à 'Sept sur sept'.

⁴⁶ www.vie-publique.fr/discours: 7.12.1993. Intervention du ministre des affaires étrangères, M. Alain Juppé au Sénat.

⁴⁷ www.vie-publique.fr/discours: 7.12.1993. Conférence de presse M. Alain Juppé et M. Jean Puech; 8.12.1993. Réponse du premier ministre à une question d'actualité à l'Assemblée nationale.

the accord for France as a whole – the potential for economic growth, the international image of France and its role in the world – that France now accepted the GATT agreement.

The FNSEA was still not satisfied, though. They agreed that there were some improvements in the accord, but claimed the EC had made concessions on tariffication without gaining anything in return (*L'Information Agricole* December 1993). This begs the question about whether the farm lobby was very influential in 1993. During the year, the farm lobby had repeated its demands of renegotiation and, if necessary, the use of the French veto and warned the government against backtracking.⁴⁸ Overall, though, the farm lobby tended to be supportive of how the government tried to reach its goal of renegotiations (*Agence Europe* 2.9.1993; *Le Monde* 1.9.1993). While Devuyt argues that the farm lobby effectively influenced the French position taking in 1993 (1995), I would argue that, even though domestic considerations played a role, it is implausible that it was farm lobby pressure that led France to take a hard-line position on agriculture. First of all, the prime minister and the *Quai d'Orsay* had effectively taking over control of policy making regarding the Uruguay Round, and the Ministry of Agriculture and the farm organizations were pushed to the sidelines (Epstein 1997). Furthermore, the Ministry of Agriculture even considered mobilization of the farm lobby to be limited and even encouraged demonstrations as a means of support for the government.⁴⁹ To the extent that the government defended French agriculture, this was rather based on governmental concerns for its reputation, having promised not to accept any accord that would prejudice French agricultural interests. Acceptance of the December GATT deal was almost inevitable considering the French overall interest. The new agricultural deal was less economically costly and the GATT deal as a whole also offered advantages in other domains. Furthermore, both the United States and the GATT Secretary General had issued credible threats that December 15 would be the final deadline for the Uruguay Round (Alons 2010: 108). If this deadline was not met, the round would have failed and gains in other domains would be lost.

1993 thus showed how different domestic considerations first made the government bent on gaining renegotiation and how they used an appeal to the Franco-German friendship to reach this goal. Considering French overall political and economic interests, it really had no other choice but to accept the final deal in 1993, but 'sold' its acceptance as a victory over the United States in an attempt to convince those domestic actors who had been more critical of the deal.

Conclusion

The case study shows that the defence of its agricultural sector by the French government can largely be attributed to its perception of its economic and political interests informed by French ideas on the bases of economic and agricultural policy and the role of France in the world. While the literature often emphasizes the role of French farmers, this common claim is refuted in this article. During the GATT Uruguay Round, the French government, on some occasions defended positions that were not in line with the demands of the farm lobby. This was the case

⁴⁸ www.vie-publique.fr/discours: 22.4.1993. Interview accordée par Guay à *France-Inter*.

⁴⁹ www.vie-publique.fr/discours: 15.9.1993. Interview accordée par Puech à *RTL*.

in 1990 when the government demanded accompanying measures from the Commission against the explicit wishes of the farmers. Moreover, the variation in farm lobby mobilization showed a different trend than the development of the French negotiating position. At several moments during the negotiations, the government fiercely defended a recalcitrant position, whereas the mobilization of the farm lobby was limited. This was the case in the early 1980s when France resisted the launch of a new GATT round and again in 1991, when they denounced Dunkel's Draft Final Act, both in absence of substantial farm lobby mobilization on the issue. The article rather shows that on many occasions the farm organizations applied the arguments presented by the government in their own discourse instead of effectively influencing governmental position taking. The government, in turn, made instrumental usage of farm lobby mobilization to strengthen its position in international negotiations.

A specific set of ideas consistently informed French interests and preferences during the Uruguay Round. In the first half of the negotiations, a French perception of its economic interest informed by the idea of a French *vocation exportatrice* in particular explains French objections to the start of new GATT negotiations including agriculture. Concerns for French *grandeur* in combination with the enabling effects of the Franco-German friendship furthermore supported the French resolve not to have the negotiating agenda dominated by the United States. In the second half of the Uruguay Round, from 1990 onwards, the theme of French *grandeur* figured ever more prominently both in the farm lobby discourse as in the Government's legitimating discourse, besides the considerations of the *vocation exportatrice* and the maintenance of a European agricultural policy in line with a mercantilist interventionist paradigm. Where economic and ideational considerations coincided, ideas strengthened the government's resolve and provided the government with additional legitimacy for its position. In this vein concerns for the *vocation exportatrice* and French *grandeur* increased the economic unattractiveness of the Commission proposal in 1990 and the Draft Final Act in 1991 and at the same time legitimated the government's position. In 1992, ideational considerations even dominated French position taking, even though they ran counter to economic incentives, when France rejected the Blair House Accord although economic considerations did not justify such a position. Ideational concerns were not the only factor of influence here, though. Due to increased governmental sensitivity and a high degree of farm lobby mobilization, the government simply could not ignore the farm lobby either. Overall though, the continuing presence of the ideas of *grandeur*, *vocation exportatrice* and an interventionist policy paradigm in decision-making and in domestic discourses during the entire Uruguay Round explain France's defence of its agricultural sector, irrespective of whether the farm lobby agreed or not.

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Libération
L'Information Agricole
Süddeutsche Zeitung

Archives

ArchBuZa: Archive of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (The Hague, Netherlands)

ArchEZ: Archive of the Dutch Ministry of Economics (The Hague, Netherlands)

BArch: Bundesarchiv (Koblenz and Berlin, Germany)

CAC: Centre des Archives Contemporaine (Fontainebleau, France)